They have also been asked to eliminate bogus ration cards and initiate action against erring FPS owners under Section 3 of Essential Commodities Act, 1955.

The Government of India have set up Public Grievances' Redressal Cell in the Department of Public Distribution to attend to the complaints relating to any aspect of the Departments' functioning including the Public Distribution System. The Public Grievances' Redressal Cell has been provided with independent telephone, fax and e-mail facilities in addition to a facilitation counter to receive the public complaints. In order to attend to public complaints on priority, the Department has also designated the senior officers of the Department as members of flying squad for conducting immediate and prompt enquiry whenever the need for it is felt. The Government of India also has appointed Area Officers to States/UTs to monitor the functioning of Public Distribution System including the complaints of diversion.

Seizure of Skins and Claws of Wild Animals

*24. SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a truck-load of skins of leopards, tigers, jungle fox and other rare wild animals was seized in Ghaziabad on December 18-19, 1999;

(b) if so, the details and the estimated cost of the catche;

(c) whether any gang of smugglers and poachers has been caught and netted; if so, the details thereof; and

(d) what steps have been taken and are being taken to curb the menace?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) One package containing skins of wild animals was seized from a truck carrying clothing at Ghaziabad on December 18-19, 1999.

(b) the details are given in Statement-I (*See* below). It is difficult to ascertain the cost because these products are not consumed in the country.

(c) Yes, Sir. The details are given in Statement-II (*See* below).

(d) The steps taken to prevent poaching and illegal trade include:

A Special Co-ordination Group has been set up in the Ministry with representatives of Ministry of Home, Directorate of Revenue Intelligence and the Central Bureau of Investigation to monitor anti-poaching activities and for taking effective measures in this regard. It has also been decided to hold meetings every 2 months of Chief Wildlife Wardens of sensitive States for the purpose of intelligence gathering and to take stock of anti-poaching measures. In order to increase the effectiveness of these reviews, the State Police Officials are also being invited to these meetings. After the seizure of animal skins in Ghaziabad on December 19, 1999, 2 separate meetings of the Chief Wildlife Wardens and one meeting of the Special Co-ordination Group have been held. Special measures have been taken with effect from June, 1999 to improve the effectiveness of the administration in protected areas as also to extend the protected area network by creation of 4 additional tiger reserves. Some of these measures include:

- Availability of special funds to State Governments for creation of Strike Force to curb illegal activities in protected areas.
- Special incentive for the officers and staff of tiger reserves who work in very harsh and difficult conditions.
- Increase in compensation for cattle and human mortality due to wild animals.
- Arrangement for training wildlife officers in the National Police Academy in intelligence gathering and crime investigation of wild offences.

The Government of Uttar Pradesh has, on the request of the

Government of India, issued notification to entrust the investigation of recent seizures in Khaga, Fatehpur District and Ghaziabad to the Central Bureau of Investigation.

Statement-I

Seizure of Skins and Claws of Wild Animals

Items seized	*Quantity seized (nos.)*
Tiger skins	3
Leopard skins	50
Otter skins	5

Statement-II

Seizure of Skins and Claws of Wild Animals

Names of the accused allegedly involved in the seizure at Ghaziabad as reported by the State Government

S.No.	*Name of the accused*
1.	Sh. Pratap Chand
2.	Sh. Pappu Singh
3.	Sh. Ram Avtar Sharma
4.	Sh. Sunil Jain
5.	Sh. C.D. Kumar
6.	Sh. Mohan Singh Negi
7.	Sh. Purushotam Sharma
8.	Sh. Hari Shankar Yogi